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SUBJECT: MONTHLY POLITICAL ROUNDUP

REF: A. KIGALI 1069
[1](#)B. KIGALI 989

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

Contents

[1](#)1. (C) This edition of the monthly political roundup includes:

- Former senior military officer Patrick Karegeya left Rwanda suddenly.
- Dissension continued within the Liberal Party.
- The Government of Rwanda (GOR) presented its growth and poverty reduction strategies to the donor community.
- Police fired 129 officers for corruption and abuse of office.
- Rwandan security forces hosted African colleagues to discuss genocide and terrorism.

Patrick Karegeya: Out Of Prison, Now Out Of Country?

[1](#)2. (C) As reported earlier (ref A), former Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) spokesman and Director of External Intelligence at the National Security Service Patrick Karegeya was released from the Kanombe military detention facility on November 15 after serving an 18 month sentence. On November 26, several sources told the embassy that Karegeya had left the country with his mother and children and was now in Uganda. Independent newspaper Umuseso later ran a stop-the-presses insert detailing Karegeya's supposedly surreptitious departure and arrival in Qatar. His wife has remained behind, and confirmed his departure to close confidants. The military prosecutor's office told pol/econ chief November 28 that Karegeya, having received a prison sentence exceeding six months, and having further been stripped of his rank at sentencing, was no longer a member of the Rwanda Defense Forces. His departure, whatever the circumstances, thus involved no breach of any military statute or regulation.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment. Patrick Karegeya's sudden departure from Rwanda is a quiet contrapuntal chord to the broad chorus of support the GOR garnered from the international community this week (see paras 5-7). Rwanda is widely praised for its effective government, its commitment to significant reform in many areas, and its cooperative role in regional integration and the search for peace in the troubled areas of eastern Congo. Karegeya's departure is a reminder that a number of senior Rwandan officials and military men have left Rwanda

over the years, after falling from the inner circles of the government -- several have subsequently become bitter critics of the Kagame regime. Rwanda does well in international circles, but contentious critiques of Rwanda's performance continue, by the remnants of the genocidal Ex-FAR/Interahamwe, their supporters, and by a few former officials. End comment.

Liberal Party Internal Dissension Continues

¶4. (C) In October two dissident Liberal Party (PL) parliamentarians lost their seats in the Chamber of Deputies following their dismissal by party leadership (ref B). In November they lost their case before the High Court contesting their dismissal -- they have appealed to the Supreme Court. A third parliamentarian, Polycarp Gatete, has now resigned his seat in the Chamber as well as his party leadership position. Gatete, who had challenged Minister of Commerce Protais Mitali for the presidency of the party, and who was widely considered to be the principal backstage supporter of his two colleagues' public protests and court case, faced continuing efforts by Mitali to oust him from the party. Gatete told embassy political section staff that he consulted with several senior officials in the ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) before he resigned, to reassure them that he intended to remain in Rwanda as an ordinary PL member and businessman -- an apparent effort to distance himself from Patrick Karegeya and other senior Rwandans who have left Rwanda after losing their senior positions.

GOR Presents EDPRS at Development Partners' Meeting

¶5. (SBU) At the seventh annual Rwanda Development Partners' Meeting in Kigali, November 26-27, the GOR presented its long-awaited Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) to the assembled donor missions and NGO community. The EDPRS has three main "flagships:" Sustainable Growth for Jobs and Exports; Vision 2020 Umurenge ("district level"); and Governance. The first flagship concentrates on an ambitious public investment program and expansion of the financial sector. The second flagship focuses on improving the productive capacity of the rural poor through public works, promotion of cooperatives, credit packages and direct support to disadvantaged populations. The third flagship will "anchor" poverty reduction and economic expansion through low corruption, efficient government, and decentralization of service delivery.

¶6. (SBU) President Kagame in his opening remarks stressed the importance of agriculture, regional integration (particularly with the East African Community - the EAC, which Rwanda joined July 1st), private sector development, and good governance. "Our country's development prospects cannot be separated from the fate of our agriculture, because most of our people toil daily in this sector that remains essentially subsistence and to a large extent, a poverty trap." He then went on to highlight those initiatives, aside from agricultural programs, meant to transform Rwanda's economy and lift its population from poverty: entry into the EAC and the prospect of tapping into its many market opportunities; a strong and dynamic private sector, and a strong emphasis on technical and vocational training.

¶7. (SBU) Various members of the donor community expressed broad support for the EDPRS and Rwanda's development goals, while cautioning that certain risks and constraints should be factored into Rwanda's development strategies (factors that a parade of GOR officials delineated themselves in great detail). Local IMF head Lars Engstrom applauded Rwanda's macroeconomic performance, with an economy growing at close to 6 percent a year for the past half-decade, and inflation generally under 10 percent. Boosting exports, expanding the tax base, paying close attention to debt sustainability, these and other issues required close attention from the GOR and the donor community, he said. Ambassador Arietti noted the USG's extensive involvement through PEPFAR and the President's Malaria Initiative in the health of Rwanda's

growing population, and noted as well the ongoing development of a Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Country Plan.

Ambassador Arietti also spoke of the importance of reduced restrictions on the press and civil society organizations: "Rwanda must be tolerant of criticism and use it to correct abuses if and when they occur."

Regional Intelligence Gathering in Kigali

¶18. (C) The GOR hosted a meeting of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) November 5-9 with the stated focus of developing strategies to fight genocide ideology on the continent. CISSA, established in 2004 and consisting of 46 African member countries, brings intelligence and security officials together on a regular basis to address security challenges faced by members of the African Union and to promote the sharing of information and the strategic coordination of intelligence activities. The Rwandan National Security Advisor told the embassy that CISSA members, in closed door sessions, also discussed anti-terror efforts, including terrorist finance and border security issues.

Police Fire 129 Officers

¶19. (SBU) PolOffs met recently with Deputy Police Commissioner Mary Gahonzire to discuss the recent firings of 129 Rwandan National Police (RNP) personnel and RNP efforts to combat gender based violence (GBV). Of the 129 fired policemen Gahonzire said 62 lost their jobs for corruption offenses (mainly for soliciting bribes from the public), and 67 for "gross indiscipline," including theft, drunkenness, sleeping on duty, and one murder. Those acts which rose to the level of criminal offenses had been referred to the prosecutor general's office, and several prosecutions were already underway, she indicated. To show the Rwandan public that the RNP took disciplinary issues seriously, the RNP published an "advertisement" in the New Times showing photographs of several dozen officers dismissed for corruption. The dismissed police personnel constituted just over 2 percent of the police force (roughly 6000 rank and file and 460 senior officers), she added.

¶10. (SBU) Gahonzire also outlined the RNP,s strategies to combat GBV. A Child and Family Protection unit in the RNP was formed in 2001, and a national gender desk was established in 2005. As of 2007, each police station also now has a designated gender officer (approximately 62 nation-wide). The national gender desk trains officers on GBV investigation procedures and monitors conviction rates in GBV cases nationwide. Special facilities for interviewing children and victims of GBV have been established at the gender desk, and free medical services are offered to them. A toll-free hotline for victims of GBV has also been created, and the number has been communicated through the media. Police have also trained members of the public as counselors, offered presentations on GBV in schools, and discussed GBV during umuganda (monthly community work projects).

